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PRINCE BISMARCK, AS A FRIEND OF AMERICA AND AS A STATESMAN.

PART II.

PRINCE BISMARCK passes for a man of inflexible character, self-assured, without ever a doubt or scruple concerning either his aims or his results. Many suppose that he must look back upon his deeds and creations as on the seventh day God the Father contemplated the world he had made. This I will not dispute. But he has also hours of weakness, moments of apparent or real dissatisfaction with his own performances or with his fortune—sad, or rather depressed moods, which take the form of despondency. The strong Prince Bismarck is then transformed into a wearied Prince Hamlet. Anon he strongly reminds us, in certain respects, of Achilles sulking in his tent before Ilion, or of the exclamation of the preacher, Solomon: "I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." It may be that these moods are the expression of a mystic process in his soul, of a sentiment akin to that of the philosopher who said, "The more I know, the better do I see how little I know"; but, possibly, too, they are simply the result of physical causes, over-excitement, exhaustion, disturbance of the nervous system.

One evening at Varzin, after contemplating for a while the darkening horizon, he complained to us that he had derived little pleasure or satisfaction from his political labors, which had won for him no friends, which had brought happiness to no one, either to himself, to his family, or to others. We expressed dissent, but he went on to say that "on the contrary, they had made many unhappy. But for me three great wars would not have occurred, eighty thousand men would not have fallen in battle, and parents, brothers,

sisters, widows, would not have mourned." "Nor sweethearts," some one added. "Nor sweethearts," he repeated, in monotone. "That, however, I have settled with God. Still I have reaped little or no happiness from all that I have done ; but, on the contrary, much vexation, anxiety, weariness, and ill usage." He continued for a time in the same strain. The rest of us were silent, and I was surprised. Subsequently I learned that of late years he has repeatedly expressed himself to the same effect.

In his correspondence, too, we find evidences of this Hamlet mood, and at a rather early period of his life. When, in 1859, Austria was defeated in the war with France and Italy, and Prussia was preparing to help her, Bismarck, who rightly thought that no good would come of it, but who, at that time holding a subordinate position, was unable to revoke a step that afterward was rendered unnecessary by the Peace of Villafranca, wrote as follows: "God's will be done ! but the whole thing is simply a question of time. Nations and individuals, folly and wisdom, war and peace, come and go like the waves, but the sea remains. Truly, there is in this world nothing but hypocrisy and jugglery ; and whether it is a fever or a bullet that does away this mask of flesh, off it must come, sooner or later, and then an Austrian and a Prussian will be so much alike, provided they are of the same stature, that it will not be easy to distinguish them. Even fools and wise men, when reduced to skeletons, are very much alike. This consideration, it is true, does away with special patriotism, but even now we should be driven to despair were our happiness to depend on that."

We find in these utterances much that points toward a characteristic trait, which forms the groundwork of the whole nature and action of our hero, and on which I propose to throw a little light. In him, the sense of the vanity of all human and earthly things is associated with the belief that beyond them or within them is a Something higher, a firm, everlasting stay and comfort for toiling, fighting, suffering man ; above the incessant changes of terrestrial things, a divine loadstar that never quits its place, whose light is unalterable ; on this he must keep his eyes ever fixed if he would at all times find the right way to that which will afford peace and safety to himself and to those for whom he labors, and fights, and suffers. In other words, Bismarck is a God-fearing man who seeks his strength in religion, who bases his political action upon religion, and who lives in the conviction that death is only the passage into another life, for which the present should be a preparation.

On his first appearance upon the stage of politics he expressed this conviction in the most definite terms. On June 15, 1847, he made a speech in the Landtag, in which, among other things, he said: "I am of the opinion that the idea of the Christian state is as old as the *ci-devant* Holy Roman Empire, as old as any European state; that it is the very soil in which those states struck root; and that the state which would have its permanence insured, which would even justify its own existence, must rest on the basis of religion. To me, the words 'by the grace of God,' which Christian potentates put after their names, are no empty sound; but, therein, I see the acknowledgment that princes desire to wield the scepter which God has intrusted to them in accordance with his will. But I can only recognize as God's will what is revealed in the Christian gospels; and I hold that I am justified in calling that a Christian state which sets itself the task of realizing the teaching of Christianity. If a religious basis is recognized for the state at all, that basis, in my opinion, can only be Christianity. Take away from under the state this religious basis, and you have only a casual aggregate of rights, a sort of bulwark against the war of all against all—an idea entertained by the older philosophy. But then its legislation will not refresh itself at the primal fount of everlasting truth, but will conform itself to the vague and fluctuating notions of humanity that happen to be current at the time in the minds of rulers. In such a state I do not see how communistic ideas about the immorality of property, and the high ethical value of theft as an attempt at restoring man's original rights, can be denied the opportunity of asserting themselves whenever they feel in themselves the power to do so. Such ideas are esteemed rational by those who hold them; indeed, they are regarded as the highest result of human reason. Let us not, therefore, gentlemen, derogate from Christianity in the eyes of the people by showing them that it is not essential for their law-givers;* let us not deprive them of the comforting assurance that our legislation has its source in Christianity, and that the state aims at the realization of Christian teaching, though it may not always attain that end.

Thus Bismarck held that a state without a religious basis is unthinkable, that the religious basis of European states is Christianity, and that their object is the realization of Christian sentiments and of Christian habits of living. The justness of these

* The matter under debate was the conferring of active and passive electoral rights upon Jews.

propositions is indisputable, though the orator did not make proper application of them at the time. It did not follow from the Christian character of the modern state that people must uphold an arbitrary theologico-political system which in the reign of Frederick William IV had identified itself with the idea of a Christian state and had usurped its name. Bismarck held this erroneous opinion then, but subsequently he repudiated it together with other errors of his youth. But what gives special significance to this speech is the stress he lays upon revelation in view of the instability of earthly truth. Here we discover a marked feature of his character. Certitude is vital air for the hero, and creative action is impossible if the convictions of the worker do not rest on the firmest foundations. Luther's whole nature finds expression in the first verse of his hymn—

“Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott.”

There have been heroes who presumptuously or under the guidance of unconscious necessity have found in themselves the law of their conduct, and then would fain make that law the law of their nation, or, like Napoleon I, of all nations. Other heroes have taken the moral code, the conscience, of their countrymen as the rule of their own life and conduct: of these is Bismarck. But God dwells in the conscience of nations. With him, Kant's “Categorical Imperative,” the leader of Prussian and German politics has triumphed over all hindrances to his great reformatory work. With eyes steadily fixed on him, and through intimate communion with him, who is the source of all fidelity to duty and of all moral power, he has gone on from victory to victory.

Thoughts of like tenor with the above have been again and again expressed by the Chancellor during his maturer years, both in public and in private life. When in March, 1870, there was a debate in the North German Reichstag on the abolition of capital punishment, Bismarck spoke against a measure dictated by the humanitarianism of the day. “If,” he said, “I were to represent the impression the debate has made on my mind, I should say that the opponents of capital punishment overrate the value of life in this world and ascribe too great significance to death. I can understand how the death-penalty should seem harder to one who does not believe in a continuance of the individual life after the death of the body, than to one who believes in the immortality of the soul he has received from God. But when I consider the question more

closely I can hardly accept even this view. For him who possesses not the faith which I from my heart confess, that death is a passage from one life into another, and that it is competent for us to give to the worst criminal on his death-bed the comforting assurance, *Mors janua vitæ*—for him who shares not in this conviction, the enjoyments of this life must have such value that I almost envy him the sensations they yield to him. His occupations must produce for him results so satisfactory that I am unable to enter into his feelings when, fully assured that his personal existence terminates for good and all in death, he finds it worth while to live on.”

The orator made an allusion to Hamlet’s soliloquy, and then quoted a passage or two from Schiller. “I have felt to-day,” he said, “that the saying of the poet, ‘Und setzet ihr nicht das Leben ein, nie wird euch das Leben gewonnen sein’,* and that other saying, ‘Das Leben der Güter höchstes nicht ist,’† have among us fallen into oblivion, buried in a wilderness of what, in my opinion, is a false sentimentality.”

These judgments, I take it, pronounced by this man in a tone of unalterable conviction, place before us a character that recalls the nobility and the grandeur of the ancients, and the hearty contempt of the world shown by the early Christians, when with serene composure they entered the horrid *cavea* of the Colosseum, whence there was no return. Amid his temporal concerns ever mindful of eternity; by his faith in this ever armed against vicissitude; a calm, tranquil personality, a mariner directing his course by an unerring compass—such is Bismarck; and in truth only such a genius could achieve success where hitherto the German people had wrought in vain, where many eminent men had striven to no purpose, where so many valiant Germans had sacrificed that which, though not the highest, is still a high good.

Even within the last few years Bismarck has made public profession of the same principles which he first declared thirty years ago. He is no longer by any means the representative of the hierarchical orthodox party, but he is as he always was a sincere Christian. “Christianity, not creeds,” said he to me on the 5th of October, 1878. He seldom goes to church, perhaps out of regard for his health; but in 1870, before going to the war, he felt the need of nerving himself for the combat by partaking of the Lord’s Supper. Further, I would quote one remark made by him on October 9, 1878,

* If you do not plant life, you will never reap life.

† Life is not the highest good.

in the debate upon the socialist law : "If I were to accept the belief held by these people—For myself I will say that I lead a busy life, my position is satisfactory, and yet all this could not inspire me with the wish to live another day were it not that I possess that which the poet calls 'a faith in God and in a better future.' Rob the poor of that, and you predispose them for that weariness of life which finds expression in deeds like those we lately witnessed."

But Bismarck gave the strongest and the most emphatic proof of his strictly religious mind and heart on that memorable evening at Ferrières, as recorded in my book, "Graf Bismarck und seine Leute" (vol. i, p. 208). I will here recount rather more in detail the main points of that conversation.

It was September 28th, and we were at dinner. The company had been talking of matters more or less indifferent, as pheasant-shooting, champagne-punch, etc., when the Chancellor turned the conversation to graver topics, and at last began a longer discourse, suggested, as to the metaphor with which it began, by a spot of grease on the table-cloth ; and which at times assumed the character of a dialogue between the Chancellor and his kinsman, Herr von Katt, who sat beside him. Bismarck said—and I report him *verbatim*, for I took down his remarks stenographically : "The grease-spot (*scilicet*, the feeling that it is a noble thing to die for country and honor, even without recognition) is sinking deeper into the people now that it is soaked with blood. The corporal has essentially the same sense of duty as the lieutenant and the colonel, that is to say, among us Germans. With us this runs through every stratum of the nation. The French are a mass easily brought under the control of one man, and are then a great force. With us, each one has a mind of his own ; but when, as now, Germans are in great numbers of one mind, they can be relied upon for mighty enterprises. If they were *all* of one mind, they would be omnipotent. . . . The sense of duty in a man who submits to be shot dead, alone, in the dark (meaning, no doubt, without thought of recompense or glory for steadfastly holding the post assigned to him—without fear or hope, and with eye single to his duty), this the French have not. It comes of the residuum of faith in our people—of the fact that I know there is One who sees me, even when the lieutenant sees me not."

"Do you believe, Excellency, that they really reflect on this?" asked the Landrath von Fürstenstein, one of the guests.

"Reflect? No ; it is a feeling, a humor, an instinct—what you

please. If they reflect, it is gone ; they argue themselves out of it. How, without faith in a revealed religion, in God who wills what is good, in a Supreme Judge and a life to come, men can live together harmoniously, each doing his duty and letting every one else do his, I do not understand."

Here the Grand Duke of Weimar was announced. "I believe that he, too, will be revealed," said the Chancellor, laughing ; "but let him wait." Then he went on talking for a good quarter of an hour longer, departing now and then from his proper theme, and oftentimes repeating the same idea in different words. "Were I no longer a Christian, I would not remain an hour in the King's service. If I did not obey God, if I did not count upon him, I should certainly pay no homage to earthly masters. I should have to live, of course ; I should be in a good enough position, and should have no need of them. Why should I fret and toil unceasingly in this world, and expose myself to perplexities and ill usage, if I did not feel that I must do my duty ? I have a firm, unshaken faith in a life after death—therefore am I a royalist, otherwise I should be a republican. If I did not believe in a divine order which has destined this German nation for something good and great, I would forthwith go out of the diplomatic business, or I would never have entered it. To what original to ascribe the sense of duty I know not, except to God. Orders and titles have no charm for me. The firm stand that for ten years I have taken against all possible absurdities of the court I owe purely to my decided faith. Take from me this faith and you take from me my country. If I were not a Christian and a firm believer, if I had not the miraculous basis of religion, you would never have had such a chancellor. Give me a successor on this basis, and I retire at once. But I am living among heathen. When I say this, I do not mean to make proselytes, but needs I must confess this faith."

"But," said Katt, "surely the Greeks and Romans practiced self-denial and devotion—surely they had a love of country and did great things with it ; and many people now," he was convinced, "do the same thing from patriotic feeling and the sense of belonging to a great unity."

The Minister replied : "This self-denial and devotion to duty toward the state and the King is with us only a relic of the faith of our fathers and grandfathers in transformed shape—more indistinct and yet active, faith and yet faith no longer. . . . How gladly I should be off !" he continued ; "I delight in the woods and in

nature. Take away from me my relation to God, and I am the man to pack up to-morrow and be off for Varzin to grow my oats. I have then no King, and why? If it were not God's command, why should I submit to these Hohenzollern? They are a Swabian family no better than my own, and I should have no interest in them."

From this, in the best sense of the term, *religious tone* of our hero's whole nature—a feature in which he strongly reminds us of Cromwell—springs another of his characteristics, which I might describe as the expenditure of his entire personality upon the tasks assigned to him: he pays, or rather prepays, for his results by entire self-devotion. On the 7th of April, 1878, I had the honor of dining with the Chancellor, and, in the course of conversation, he called himself an old man. The Princess would not let this pass, so she remarked, "You are only sixty-three years of age." He replied, "Yes, that is true, but I have always lived fast, and on a cash basis" (*baar*). Then, turning to me, he added: "*Baar*, that is to say, I have always thrown my whole self into whatever I did, and have paid for it in health and strength."

But Bismarck's religion is not obtrusive. He makes no parade with it, like certain Pharisees, and his piety is free from intolerance, and from the desire of imposing upon others his own faith, or a behavior approved by the dominant Church. Very distinctly he condemns all constraint in such matters. He has never made war on Catholics as such. He has always only in so far opposed them, and made them to feel the weight of his arm, as they have avowed themselves Ultramontane, and have inscribed on their banners, and striven to make effective, the right of Rome to rule in Germany, and the competence of the Church to invade the sphere of the state. He is neither intolerant nor bigoted.

A conversation at St. Avold on the question how the United States could tolerate the Mormons with their polygamy led him to express his opinion on the subject of religious liberty in general, which he advocated very strongly; but, said he, it must be impartial and reciprocal. "Every man must be saved in his own way," he said; "I will urge this some day, and the Reichstag will certainly approve. But the church property must, of course, remain with those who stick to the old Church to which it belongs. The man who goes out must be ready to sacrifice to his conviction, or rather to his unbelief. It is not taken in bad part if Catholics are orthodox, not at all if Jews are so; but orthodoxy in Protestants

gives great offense, and the Church is constantly decried for her persecuting spirit if she expels the unorthodox. Then, when the orthodox are persecuted and derided in the press—which in Germany is unfortunately in the hands of Jews—and in society, people think that is just as it ought to be.”

At Versailles the same subject was up for discussion one evening at table, and again the Chancellor distinctly declared himself to be in favor of toleration in religious matters. “But,” he continued, “the *illuminati* are not tolerant. They persecute those who believe, not indeed with the stake, for that would not do, but with contempt and insolence in the newspapers; and among the people, so far as they belong to the party of unbelief, toleration has made but little way. I should not like to see how delighted they would be here to have Pastor Knak* hanged.” The conversation now turned to the strict observance of Sunday in England, and the Minister declared the Sabbath rest to be good. As a proprietor he did what he could to make Sunday a day of rest from labor on his estate, only he did not wish to see people coerced. “Every one must know,” said he, “how he should best prepare for the future life. On Sunday no work should be done, not so much because it is against God’s command, as on man’s account, who needs recreation, and must have opportunity for attending to his spiritual affairs. . . . This, of course, does not apply to the service of the state, above all not to the diplomatic service, for dispatches and telegrams arrive on Sunday that must forthwith be attended to. Neither is anything to be said against our peasants bringing in their hay or corn on Sunday in the harvest after long rain, when fine weather begins on a Saturday. I could not find in my heart to forbid this to my tenants in the contract, although I should not do it myself, being able to bear the possible damage of a rainy Sunday. It is thought by our proprietors improper even in such cases to let their people work on a Sunday.”

I mentioned that pious folk in America allow no cooking on Sunday, and that in New York I was once asked to dinner, and got only cold victuals. “Yes,” replied the Chancellor, “in Frankfort, while I was still freer, we always dined more simply on Sunday, and I never used my carriage, for the sake of the servants.”

One day (it was in 1876, I think) the Chancellor went out for a ride along the boundary of his Varzin estate. To his great surprise he saw, though it was Sunday, a number of men at work in the

* A leader among the orthodox in Berlin, since deceased.

fields with hoe and spade. "What men are those?" he asked of his overseer. "Our laborers, your Highness," was the reply; "we can not spare them in the six week-days, and now they must work their own fields on Sunday." The Prince rode home, and there immediately wrote a note to all the overseers of his estates to the effect that the cultivation of the laborers' fields should always precede that of his own, but that in future he would not permit any work to be done on Sunday. The result was that the laborers did what was necessary for their own fields in two or three days, and then went cheerfully to work on those of the Prince, so that the head overseer was soon able to report that never before had the field-work been done so quickly.

Bismarck does not favor the efforts made to introduce among us parliamentarism, as in England—not from principle, but because he holds it to be not the only system of government that promotes the happiness of the people, and because it is not adapted to Germany, inasmuch as the conditions do not exist here, where, instead of only two political parties, we have half a dozen. But he is a sincere constitutionalist, and, during the conflict, his action was, on the whole, constitutional.

His general principles of internal policy he very plainly expressed to the Frenchmen who dined with him at Versailles on January 30, 1871. He said that consistency in these matters, i. e., politics, often becomes simply blundering obstinacy and self-will. One must be guided by facts, by the way things lie, by the possibilities—taking into account the conditions, and serving his country according to circumstances, and not following one's own opinions, which are often simply prejudices. When he first entered political life, as a green young man, he had very different ideas and aims from what he had now. But he had changed his mind after thinking the matter over, and then had not shrunk from sacrificing his own wishes, if anything was to be gained thereby, to the necessities of the day. One must not force one's own inclinations and wishes upon one's country, he further remarked; and then concluded, "*La patrie veut être servie et pas dominée.*" This last remark exceedingly pleased the Frenchmen, who pronounced it true and profound. Still, one of them objected that this would subject genius to the will and opinion of the majority—though, as a rule, majorities have ever had but little understanding, little knowledge of affairs, and little character. The Chancellor very neatly replied, saying that his sense of responsibility to God was his guiding star, and declaring "*devoir*" to be a

higher and a more powerful principle than the "droit du génie" which his French visitors had lauded.

About this same time he remarked to us: "Favre has no idea how things go on our side. He has again and again reminded me that France is the land of freedom, while despotism reigns among us. I had told him, for instance, that we wanted money, and Paris must procure it. He thought we might raise a loan. That could not be done, I replied, without the Reichstag or the Landtag. 'Oh,' said he, 'you surely could raise five hundred million francs without the Chamber.' 'No, nor five francs,' I replied. He could not believe it. But I told him that I had passed four years of struggle with our popular representatives, yet it had never occurred to me to raise a loan without the consent of the Landtag; at that point I had ever halted. This seemed rather to alter his opinion; but his only remark was that in France *on ne se générait pas*."

The conflict which arose out of the question of army reform in the years preceding 1866 produced an unpleasant state of things. It was impossible to tell the Prussian representatives that we were in this way making ready for a policy of action. The new Minister did not fail to throw out hints in a general way, but he must needs speak very plainly, and disclose his plan in detail, if he would convince and win to himself his opponents in the House of Deputies, which was, of course, quite impossible. Bismarck, therefore, bethought him of a rather strained interpretation of the Constitution. "The budget," he said, "is a legislative act, and for such act three factors are required, to wit, the House of Deputies, the House of Lords, and the Crown. Now, if one of these three refuses assent, as in the present case, there is no budget. But the state can not stand still, and hence, in default of a budget, the Crown must dispose of the public moneys." This interpretation was correct down to the conclusion. Certainly the state must endure, even when there is no budget, but the Crown is not, therefore, constitutionally empowered to originate fundamental remedies. If the good of the state demands innovations, and the representatives of the people withhold their assent to them, then such innovations must be made on the responsibility of the Ministers, until the country has changed its mind and given assent. And it is well when the conversion is not too long delayed. So it was with army reform and the strife it called forth. When the victories of 1866 had converted the country, Bismarck, who at the same time had, in a measure, gained a victory over the opposition at home, in strict conformity with

constitutional usage, asked the Landtag to grant indemnity—that is, he now repudiated the theory that, whenever the budget is rejected by the House of Deputies, the Crown acquires unrestricted power to make organic innovations. It was, however, fortunate that before internal strife had resulted too seriously, chance gave occasion for a foreign war. In all this it was only dreamers who thought of a revolution. “Revolutions,” said the Chancellor, “are, in Prussia, the work of the kings alone.” Nevertheless, had these internal dissensions lasted much longer, and the popular mind in Prussia been so estranged from the Government as to threaten such an uprising as that of 1866, it would have been unfortunate for Germany, and indeed for all Europe.

With justice does the Chancellor object to deputies who look on their parliamentary avocation as their only business, as a trade; and it is mainly on this account that he refuses to grant a salary to members. He has repeatedly called attention to the peril of such a degradation of the office of a representative. Thus, in January, 1869, speaking in the Prussian Landtag of the difficulty of finding capable men who can amid their ordinary occupations find opportunity to fit themselves successively for the Landtag, the Zollparliament, and the Reichstag, he said: “Before long, men will make a trade of being representatives, as of being doctors or lawyers. The result will be that we shall have a special class, that of the popular representative, who gradually will come to resemble more closely a bureaucratic element than a body representing the country and in intimate communication with the people. Such men, when they fail of election to Parliament, have nothing else to do but to travel.”

In this connection I recall further the speech of May 8, 1879, in which the Chancellor, while defending his project of customs reform, remarked to the Deputy Lasker that his policy was that of a man without property. He then went on as follows: “He is one of those gentlemen who hitherto, at every step in our law-reforms, have been a majority, and of whom the Scripture says that they sow not, neither do they reap; they neither spin nor weave, yet are they clothed and fed. In other words, it must be confessed that the majority of our law-makers is made up of men who are engaged neither in manufactures nor in agriculture; and such men easily lose whatever little sympathy they may have with the interests here represented by the Government. These non-producers in our Parliament, these law-makers who live on salaries, fees, pensions, or annuities, who belong to the press, law, medicine, or other learned

professions ; but particularly the party leaders who, through their eloquence and their influence over their colleagues, are wont to control the majority, and who, year in and year out, devote themselves to this business partly through the press, partly in Parliament—these men surely ought to know that projects which have their origin in the bureau or in theory must necessarily be faulty unless they are aided by some experience and practical sense. Then, too, they ought to take to heart the maxim '*Noblesse oblige*,' for he who has thus for years enjoyed power in the legislative hall must think of the one who serves as the anvil when the hammer of legislation falls."

The Prince is equally justified in his opposition to the *doctrinaire* jurists who make their presence felt in our Parliaments. These men are dominated, or at least powerfully influenced, by the erroneous belief that all questions which touch upon their province, and in particular all constitutional questions, can be solved by the application of formal rules ; and not only the Party of Progress, but also certain leaders of less radical factions, as Lasker, Bamberger, and Von Forckenbeck, are inclined to compress the fullness and complexity of our national life within the limits of dead-letter law. In other words, jurisprudence takes too prominent a place in the ranks of our liberal parties, and the tone of the debates reminds one of a lawsuit into which the not very intelligible dogmatism of speculative professors is injected. As Herr von Benningsen, a leader of the National Liberals, and himself a jurist, remarked to me a few years ago, "Our Liberal movement is mainly an effort of the lawyers to win a higher position." He had reference to Hanoverian lawyers, but we need only glance at the important part played by this class in our whole political life to see plainly that the remark applies to all Germany. I think highly of lawyers and professors as a class ; but a teacher whose words his pupils must accept without question soon comes to think himself infallible ; and experience proves that the lawyer who is always engaged on one side in politics is apt to become obstinately dogmatic. This is, unhappily, the characteristic of the eloquence of our Parliamentary debaters, who, instead of transacting business in a rational way, are constantly engaged in petty disputes with the Chancellor. Idealists who have no practical intercourse with the people have, in the different parties, acquired an influence that is positively baneful. The consequence is, that the decision of questions of the highest importance for the welfare of the people lies in the hands of professional poli-

ticians, intriguers, and leaders of coteries. Many of the speeches made in our Reichstag are no better than those of the National Assembly of 1848—a flood of words with little sense, for the most part mere rhetorical pugilism that attacks all sorts of subjects with ready-made theories and catchwords, and that always must have the last word.

Nor is there any comfort in the fact that this phenomenon has still worse consequences among some of our neighbors—in Italy, for example, where the Minister is in the habit of giving up the field to the lawyers; for the same thing might happen here were the Government less firm than it is at present. But the “*Rechtsstaat*” (jurist-state), which a large proportion of our representatives from the bar and from the bench have more or less distinctly in view, inasmuch as it is purely juristic, and gives to jurists all the power, would be exactly the reverse of that which its advocates in the Parliament, and the press are striving for, or think they are striving for. It would disfranchise and disqualify all powers and classes which exist in the state alongside of the legists, and which have as good a right to have views and interests of their own. The attempt to set up a jurist-state, therefore, is in no wise better or more just than would be the attempts of theologians to set up a state on strictly theological principles, of the Vatican to make the Church supreme in political affairs, or of any class of men to constitute a state in which the feudal lord or the merchant should decide what may be done and what may not be done. It was surely well and truly said, ‘*Justitia est fundamentum regnorum.*’ Law, right, is the corner-stone of the state. But its creating and living power is something else, and *jurisprudence* has no valid claim to be regarded as the basis of the state. That creative force is, on the contrary, the natural life as a whole. Statesmanship fashions and shapes its products, and political science notes these products, grouping them in harmonious series.

Prince Bismarck, being a thoroughly candid statesman, loves candor in others, and is the sworn enemy of all simulation, all empty show, all mere phrases. He abhors florid oratory, and I have often heard him condemn the pomposity of most diplomats. Von Gager, at one time so famous, was in his eyes a man with the mien of Jupiter, signifying nothing—a “*phrasengiesskanne*” (phrase-watering-pot). Jules Favre, who strove to bring into diplomacy the arts of an advocate—the impressive gestures and the high-flown oratory—was for him a comic actor. It was a delightful description

he gave us on January 31, 1871, of Waldeck, the great light of the Berlin Democrats: "He reminds me of Favre; always consistent, true to his principles, with his opinion and conclusion made up beforehand; then a stately presence, venerable white beard, voice deep from the chest, even when he speaks of trifles. All this is quite effective. He would deliver a speech in a voice quavering with earnestness, to tell you that the spoon remains in the glass, and would proclaim any man a scoundrel who did not agree with him. Everybody would declare his assent, and laud his forceful sentiments." When General Reille told him, after the battle of Sedan, that the French would blow up themselves and the fortress rather than submit to our hard conditions, the Chancellor dryly replied to this pathetic phrase, "*Faites sauter.*"

The first time I ever spoke to the Chancellor was on the 24th of February, 1870, and he asked if I knew what was the order of the day in the Reichstag. I said "No," adding that I had had too much to do to notice what was in the newspapers. "Well," he replied, "the question was about the mooted admission of Baden into the North German Confederation. Why can not people wait for that event to come about of itself? They must treat everything from a partisan point of view and as speech-makers! It is most unpleasant to have to answer such speeches, I might say such prattle. In fact, it is with these oratorical gentlemen as with many ladies who have small feet which they are always displaying in shoes much too small for them. We have the German question in good train now; but it has its own time—a year, perhaps five years, possibly even ten. I can not make it advance any quicker; no more can these gentlemen, with all their powerful and emotional eloquence."

Quite characteristic of his way of dealing with such matters were the remarks he made in our hearing at Versailles on the evening of February 2, 1871. He told us that during the day he had been to St. Cloud, and that on the way thither he had met many people with household utensils and beds, probably returning inhabitants of the villages around Paris, who, during the siege, had fled from their homes. "The women looked quite friendly," he observed, "but the men, on seeing the Prussian uniform, assumed a hostile expression and a heroic attitude. This reminds me of the old Neapolitan army which had a word of command that ordered the men to assume a like attitude. Where in our army the command would be, 'Arms to the charge, right,' in the Neapolitan army it would be, 'Faccia

feroce,' i. e., *look savage*. With the French everything lies in a magnificent attitude, a pompous speech, and an impressive, theatrical mien. If it only sounds right and looks like something, the meaning is all one. They are like the Potsdam burgher and freeholder who once told me that a speech of Radowitz had touched and affected him deeply. I asked him if he could point out any passage which had specially gone to his heart or seemed particularly fine. He could not name one. Thereupon I read the whole speech to him, and asked him what was the affecting passage. It turned out that there was nothing of the sort there, nothing either striking or affecting. In short, it was nothing but the manner and attitude of the orator, which looked as if he were saying the deepest, most interesting, and most striking things—the thoughtful glance, the devout eyes, the voice full of tone and weight. It was the same with Waldeck, though he was not so able a man or of such distinguished appearance. . . .

"The gift of oratory," he continued, "has done much mischief in Parliamentary life. Much time is wasted because every one who fancies he has any ability must have his word even when he has nothing new to offer. Speaking is too much in the air, and too little to the point. Everything is settled beforehand in committee; hence what is said in the House is for the public and the reporters. The sole object is to exhibit before the public the orator's power, and to be praised by the newspapers. But the time is coming when eloquence will be looked on as a faculty hurtful to the common weal, and a man will be punished who allows himself to be guilty of a long speech. But we have one body which admits no oratory whatever, and which nevertheless has done more for the German cause than any other, namely, the Council of the Confederation. True, I remember that at first some attempts were made in that direction, but I put a stop to all that, though properly I had no right to do so, albeit I was President. I said to them something like this: 'Gentlemen, we have nothing to do here with eloquence, with speeches intended to produce conviction, for every one brings his conviction with him in his pocket—that is to say, his instructions. It is simply a loss of time. I propose that we confine ourselves here to facts.' And so it was; there were no more long speeches. We got on all the faster with business, and the Council of the Confederation has really done a great deal."

That the Prince has but a poor opinion of the abilities and the services of most of the members of the diplomatic corps, and that

he laughs at their pomposity and arrogance, is plain from sundry of his utterances. I cite only the following :

At Ferrières he told me a delightful story of the time when he was envoy of the Diet of the Confederation at Frankfort : "At both of the sittings of the military commission, while Rochow represented Prussia in the Diet, Austria alone smoked. Rochow would certainly have liked to do the same, but he did not venture ; besides, his king, who was not a smoker, would perhaps have disapproved of such conduct. When I came, I too hankered after a cigar, and, as I did not see why I should not have it, I asked the Power in the President's chair for a light, which seemed to give him and the other gentlemen both astonishment and displeasure. Plainly it was an event for them. That time only Austria and Prussia smoked. But the other gentlemen obviously thought the matter so serious that they reported it to their respective courts. The subject required mature deliberation, and for half a year only the two Great Powers smoked. Then Schrenkh, the Bavarian envoy, began to assert the dignity of his station by smoking. Nostitz, the Saxon, had also a strong inclination to do likewise, but as yet had not received permission from his minister. Yet when at the next session he saw Bothmer, the Hanoverian, indulging in the weed, he must—for he was intensely Austrian, and had sons in the Austrian army—have come to some understanding with Rechberg ; for he also now took out a cigar from his case and puffed away. Only he of Würtemberg and he of Darmstadt were now left, and they never smoked at all. But the honor and dignity of their states imperatively required it, and so at the next sitting the Würtemberger produced a cigar—I see it still ; it was a long, slender, yellow thing—and smoked at least half of it as a burnt-offering for the Fatherland."

One evening at Versailles the Chancellor happened to remark upon the reports of ambassadors and diplomatic agents in general, which, he said, contain nothing in a pleasing form. "It is space-work, written only because something must be written. Take, for example, the reports of our consul in Paris. As you read them you kept for ever thinking, 'Now something is coming,' but it never came. It was all very fine, and one would read on and on, but at the end it was found that in fact there was nothing at all in it." Mention was made of a military plenipotentiary, who had also figured as an historian, and of him the Minister said : "It was expected that he would render some service, and, as far as quantity goes, his

services were great. As regards form, too, the same may be said. His style is pleasing, would do credit to a novelist; but, while I peruse his reports, written in a fine, ornate hand, I find that despite their length there is nothing in them."

A few days later the conversation again turned upon diplomatic reports, and the Chancellor once more pronounced them to be for the most part of no value. "In great part they consist of paper and ink," said he. "The worst is when they make them long. With Bernstorff, one is used to his sending every time such a ream of paper with stale newspaper clippings. But when any one else writes a lengthy dispatch, one gets disgusted, because as a rule there is nothing in it. If people write history out of them, there is no proper information to be got out of it. I believe the archives will be opened to them after thirty years; they might be allowed to see them much earlier. Dispatches and reports, even when they do contain something, are unintelligible to those who do not know the persons and the circumstances. Who knows after thirty years what sort of a man the writer was—whether he saw and heard to good purpose, how he looked at things, whether he was partial or prejudiced, and whether he possessed the gift of reporting them clearly and accurately? And who has any intimate acquaintance with the persons of whom he writes? We have to know what Gortshakoff or Gladstone or Granville meant in what the envoy reports of his conversations with them. Better information may be gleaned from the newspapers, of which even governments avail themselves, and where people often say more plainly what they think. But there, too, we have to know the circumstances. The main points always lie in private letters and confidential communications, even by word of mouth, nothing of which finds its way into the records."

Since Bismarck assumed control of the Foreign Office and the external diplomacy of Germany, a very different spirit is noticeable in those circles. A vast deal of work is done in Nos. 76 and 77 Wilhelmstrasse, and the Prince himself sets a good example. The whole establishment, from top to bottom, is organized with a strictness that is almost military. Every one has to obey without question, and does obey without question or murmur, whatever he may think within his own mind. Everything moves and acts in obedience to *one* will, *one* mind, and all do what they can. The man who can not make himself the passive instrument of the genius who here toils, here commands, may go his way—there is no room here for him. There must be order, strict order, subordination, harmony,

so that the machine may do its work quickly and accurately. There must be no halting, no failure produced by the exercise of individual judgment. In times past, under an easy-going and feeble administration, things were different. Then every one pursued his own policy, and ambassadors not unfrequently did the same thing. But now that a teeming mind and a strong will are in control, and the highest interests are at stake, infractions of discipline are not tolerated. Every official, even the highest, has simply to obey orders, and must consider himself in the light of a dispatch-clerk, or as a colonel or captain under the general. The councilors are not expected to give advice, but are to act as members under the head, like the other members—the *chargés d'affaires*, ambassadors, and envoys—they have to put in execution his ideas, his views, and nothing else, with the aid of whatever knowledge or skill they may possess. Individualism and the necessity of one uniform policy go not hand in hand—a lesson which the proud and self-willed Harry von Arnim learned to his cost.

While I was employed in the Foreign Office, everything was done in its political section as in a regiment. About 10 A. M., occasionally later, seldom earlier—for the Prince worked far into the night, not going to sleep till toward dawn—a servant would announce in the central bureau, "The Prince is in the breakfast-room." That was the reveille, and the first signal for action given to the little army of the Chancellor, and he then received from the hands of the dispatch secretaries all sorts of communications coming per post or otherwise. Next came the announcement, "The Prince is in his work-room." The councilors who had business with the Chancellor could now be admitted to the presence of their chief, and the rest were notified to hold themselves in readiness to answer any summons from him. Lastly, about 10 P. M., in ordinary times, but not till late in the night when there was stress of work, the tattoo, "The Prince is in the tea-room," was sounded for those whom duty still held chained to their desks, among whom, when the Chancellor was in Berlin, was always found the faithful and ever-prompt Lothar Bucher. This brought the day's labors to an end. The workers departed, the window-shutters were closed, and the servants put out the lights.

In conclusion, it might be asked whether the German nation love the man who has raised them to political power and to high honor, who has placed them in the saddle and now expects them to ride with him in new ways; who has caused a new sun to rise for

them, brighter and fairer than any that illumined their path in past days. My answer is that many admire him openly, many others secretly in spite of themselves ; few love him, for few understand him. But they who do love him love him above all the world.

MORITZ BUSCH.